

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 SAM-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 NIC-01 IO-10

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P R 100947Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1402

INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 137

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, PO

SUBJ: SOCIALIST PARTY ATTITUDE TOWARD PROPOSED UNITARY

LABOR LAW

REF: LISBON 104

1. FRANCISCO MARCELO CURTO, SOCIALIST PARTY OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE FOR LABOR AFFAIRS, CONFIRMED THAT SOCIALIST PARTY DISTURBED BY UNITARY LABOR LAW PROPOSED BY LABOR MINISTER COSTA MARTINS IN CABINET MEETING JANUARY 7. CURTO STATES THAT HE HAD HEARD THAT PPD HAD THREATENED TO PULL OUT OF GOVERNING COALITION IF LAW PASSED IN FORM PROPOSED BUT HE HAD NO FIRM INFORMATION AND COULD NOT CONFIRM THIS REPORT. SOCIALIST PARTY, ON OTHER HAND, WHILE SHARING PPD POSITION OF OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED LAW, HAS NOT EVEN CONSIDERED POSSIBILITY OF PULLING OUT OF GOVERNMENT. SOCIALISTS SEE LABOR LAW AS ONLY ONE PART OF LARGER QUESTION REGARDING COMMUNISTS' PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT.

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2. MINISTER OF LABOR COSTA MARTINS TOLD LABATT ON JANUARY 6 THAT PROPOSED LABOR LAW WOULD BE MODIFIED TO MINIMIZE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL ROLE IN LABOR AFFAIRS, E.G., NO POLITICAL PARTY OFFICIAL COULD ALSO BE UNION OFFICIAL. CURTO ALSO CONFIRMED THAT MINISTER OF LABOR IS TO SUBMIT A MODIFIED VERSION OF PROPOSED UNITARY LABOR LAW FOR CABINET CONSIDERATION ON JANUARY 17. CURTO CLAIMS MODIFIED VERSION OF LAW EVEN MORE FAVORABLE TO POSITIONS SUPPORTED BY INTERSINDICAL.

3. CURTO LAMENTS CONTINUED ABSENCES OF PARTY'S GENERAL SECRETARY MARIO SOARES ON FOREIGN MINISTRY TRAVELS WHILE IMPORTANT DECISIONS ARE PENDING, BUT SAID THAT SOARES CONCERNED OVER POSSIBILITY OF OUTBREAK OF CIVIL WAR BETWEEN LIBERATION GROUPS IN ANGOLA.

4. COMMENT: FACT THAT SOCIALIST PARTY NEWSPAPER REPUBLICA BEAT OUT CHALLENGES AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL BY INTERSINDICAL AND COMMUNIST PARTY NEWSPAPER AVANTE FOR POSSESSION AND USE OF THE PRINTING PLANT OF DEFUNCT EPOCA INDICATES THAT SOCIALISTS STILL WIELD CONSIDERABLE FORCE WITHIN GOVERNMENT AND THAT SOCIALISTS AND PPD TOGETHER HAVE POSSIBILITY OF FORCING MODIFICATION OF PROPOSED UNITARY LABOR LAW. COMMUNISTS AND INTERSINDICAL ARE REPORTEDLY SCHEDULING LABOR DEMONSTRATION JANUARY 14 PRIOR TO JANUARY 17 CABINET MEETING.
SCOTT

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LAW, PARTY ALLIANCE, LABOR UNIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LISBON00137
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: DG ALTERED PER 78 LISBON 634
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750010-0338
From: LISBON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750162/aaaaccqu.tel
Line Count: 86
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 LISBON 104
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09 JUN 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <10 JUN 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOCIALIST PARTY ATTITUDE TOWARD PROPOSED UNITARY LABOR LAW
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, PO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006